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under the auspices of

the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 14 | Fifteenth Year | April 9, 1948

Amsterdam Special

Call to Prayer

The Provisional Committee of the World Council sent a call to prayer to the Churches which will participate in the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam. It requested the Churches to arrange for special prayers to be offered for the Assembly and suggested that such prayers be included particularly in the services on Whitsunday.

The Call to Prayer is signed by the Presidents of the Provisional Committee, Dr Marc Boegner, President of the French Protestant Federation, Dr Erling Eidem, Archbishop of Upsala, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr S. Germanos, Archbishop of Thyateira, and Dr John R. Mott. It is hoped that the Churches will make the fullest possible use of this Call and remind their whole membership of their responsibility to accompany the preparations for the Assembly and the Assembly itself with their prayer. The Call reads as follows:

"In August 1948 the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches will take place at Amsterdam. We are profoundly thankful that after long years of separation, and so soon after the most devastating war in human history, the Christian Churches throughout the world will thus be able to express and to manifest their spiritual unity.

"With the blessing of God, this Assembly can mark a new experience of the glory of God, and a new acceptance by Christians and the Christian Churches of their responsibility for seeking continually to bring the whole of human life and relationships under the Kingship of Christ. The theme of our Assembly is "Man's Disorder and God's Design". God rules even in the midst of our man-made confusion. The design of God declares itself in the new environment for our lives that has been created by His acts. In the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and in the coming of His Church, a new beginning has been made in human history. 'What is old has gone, the new has come'. But at this crisis in the existence of mankind, we are compelled to confess that the contrast between the high calling of the Church and the visible institutions called Churches is only too evident. We have failed

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because we ourselves have been partakers in man's disorder. Our first and deepest need is not new organisation, but the renewal, or rather the rebirth, of the actual Churches. May God grant that we may hear the call of the Spirit!

"We confess that because of the divided state of the Churches, also, we have fallen short in the witness we should have borne to Christ. We long for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall recapture the Churches, and, manifesting His glory, lead them to speak with one clear voice, and to act as those who serve Him only as their Lord.

"The World Council of Churches is itself both a declaration of the spiritual unity of its member Churches and a means through which they may express that unity in action. Already more than a hundred and thirty Churches have joined it from the Old and New Worlds, from the East and the West - a clear sign of the longing of the Churches for deeper fellowship in Christ. The Council stands on faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. It serves the Churches, and in no way seeks to control them. It aspires after an expression of unity in which Christians and Christian Churches, joyously aware of their oneness in Jesus Christ their Lord, and pursuing an ever fuller realisation of union, shall in time of need give help and comfort to one another, and at all times inspire and exhort one another to live worthily of their common membership in the Body of Christ.

"We therefore call upon all Christians to join us in earnest prayer that the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches may be used of God for a rebirth of the Churches, and for their rededication in the unity of the faith to the common task of proclaiming His Word and doing His work among all nations."

A Prayer for the Assembly

O God Who hast poured out Thy Spirit upon Thy Church, grant that, when Thy children are gathered from all parts of the world, they may together hear and obey Thy Word, that they may seek the rebirth and the union of the Church through Thy life giving Spirit and that in the midst of the great disorder of the world they may render clear witness to Thy gracious Design for all mankind revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen. E.P.S. Geneva

Dissolution of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches

The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, which has been from the beginning one of the sponsoring organisations of the Ecumenical Press Service sends us the following communiqué:

"At a meeting recently held at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the Provisional Executive Committee of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches decided unanimously to dissolve the organisation. The office will be closed on June 30, 1948.

"This decision was due to the fact that many of the National Councils of the World Alliance had disappeared with their countries as a result of the war; others had found it impossible to resume activity after the war, particularly those in the Balkans, and still others felt that their task could be better performed in cooperation with other organisations.

because we ourselves have been partakers in man's disorder. Our first and deepest need is not new organization, but the renewal, or rather the receiving, of the spiritual dimension. May God grant that we may hear the call of the Spirit!

We confess that because of the divided state of the Churches, also, we have fallen short in the witness we should have borne to Christ. So long for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall receive the Churches, and, manifesting His glory, lead them to speak with one clear voice, and be one as there is one body, one only as their Lord.

The World Council of Churches is itself both a declaration of the reality of the ecumenical unity of the member Churches and a force through which they may increase that unity in action. Already more than a decade and twenty Churches have drawn it from the old and new worlds, from East and West and North - a clear sign of the longing of the Churches for deeper fellowship in Christ. The Council stands on faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. It serves His purposes, and in no way seeks to control them. It begins after an overturning of unity in which Christians and Christian Churches, joyfully aware of their weakness in these Christ their Lord, and pursuing an ever fuller realization of unity, small in face of need give help and welcome to one another, and in all things hearing and answer one another to live worthily of their common membership in the body of Christ.

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A Prayer for the Assembly

O God who once poured out Thy Spirit upon the Church, grant that, when the nations are gathered from all parts of the world, they may together hear and obey Thy Word, that they may seek the reunion and the union of the Church through Thy Life giving Spirit and look in the midst of the great disorder of the world this may render clear witness to Thy gracious Design for all mankind revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

W.C.C. General

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"The World Alliance was founded in 1914 at Constance, Germany, and was the first of the ecumenical movements. It played an important part in the beginning of the "Life and Work" and "Faith and Order" movements which merged in 1937 at Oxford to form the World Council of Churches. During the years between the two wars, it was one of the most effective of international religious organisations with Councils in 34 countries.

"Among its founders and active workers were the late Lord Dickinson of Painswick and the late Mr. J. Allen Baker, M.P. Among other distinguished leaders were Dr. William Pierson Merrill and Dr. Henry A. Atkinson of the U.S.A., Bishop Ireney of Novi Sad, the late Bishop Ammundsen of Denmark, Dr. Siegmund-Schultze of Germany and Pastor Jules Jézéquel of France. More recently, its President has been Professor H. Alivisator of Greece, its Treasurer Dr. Guillaume Fatio of Geneva, its Genevese representative Dr. André Bouvier, and its Secretaries Dr. Robert C. Dexter, U.S.A., and Miss Ivy Marks of Great Britain." E.P.S. Geneva

TURKEY — Resignation of Patriarch Maximos

According to the "Church Times" (London, April 2, 1948) the Ecumenical Patriarch informed the members of the Holy Synod on Easter Day that he intends to resign because of the state of his health. The Synod bestowed on Patriarch Maximos the title of Metropolitan of Ephesus, which he will assume when his resignation takes place. E.P.S. Geneva

SPAIN — Protestantism Alive

According to a recent visitor Protestantism has grown stronger since the beginning of the revolution. Through persecution it has been strengthened and won the respect of a great host in Spain. The Church which is denied the privilege of disseminating literature, has to witness in other ways.

It seems that 30% of the Protestants fled Spain at the time of the civil war. This was a heavy drain on a small minority, and it makes those who remained suspect in high places. Many of the Protestants have never known a country in which Protestantism has been a voice and a force. They worship in small, cramped quarters. Ministers earn most of their livelihood through secular employment. At present they are not allowed a public meeting, and their voice is never heard in the affairs of the nation. Protestantism has never been accepted in Spain.

The largest Protestant body is the Plymouth Brethren Communion which numbers 4000 at a minimum. The Evangelical Church of Spain is a union of Congregationalists, Methodists, Dutch Reformed and Presbyterians linked by tradition to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. At a minimum there are 2500 in this group. The main Baptist Church is related especially to the Southern Baptists in the USA. They have an active roll of 1500 members. This is the only fellowship in Spain with adequate resources for a programme expansion.

There are 9 churches in Spain affiliated with the Church of Ireland, but no bishop has visited Spain for twelve years and so there has been no regular confirmation class and no pastors have been ordained. This fellowship numbers only 1000 members, with 3 rectors serving 9 parishes.

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Persecution of Patriarch Tarkmen

According to the "Church Times" (London, April 2, 1949) the Armenian Patriarch Archbishop the Bishops of the Holy Synod on Easter Day that he intends to resign because of the state of his health. The Synod bestowed on Patriarch Zaccian the title of Metropolitan of Ephesus, which he will assume when his resignation takes place.

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The largest Protestant body is the Plymouth Brethren Communion Union numbers 4000 in a nation. The Evangelical Church of Spain is a union of Congregationalists, Methodists, Dutch Reformed and Presbyterians linked by treaties to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. At a minimum there are 250 in this group. The main Spanish Church is related especially to the Southern Presbyterians in the USA. They have an active roll of 1500 members. This is the only fellowship in Spain with adequate resources for a programme expansion.

There are 9 churches in Spain affiliated with the Church of Ireland, but no bishop has visited Spain for twelve years and so there has been no regular confirmation class and no pastors have been ordained. With flourishing churches only 1000 members, with 3 pastors serving 7 parishes.

There is a lay Evangelical training school in Barcelona conducted three nights a week by two overworked pastors. Twenty made application to attend the classes, nine were accepted. The best of these students will be urged to study at the Seminary in Madrid; this Seminary opened with 7 students in October. In the Faculty there are four teachers: one man is 73, another 70, the third is 60 but is burdened with his years, the fourth comes from Barcelone three times a year for a course of lectures.

The opportunity for Protestant education is unbelievably limited. The Fliedner family began its ministry there in 1870. They linked education to their churches and before the Spanish Civil War had 850 pupils in these church schools. In the Gymnasium there were 350 students. All these schools and classes are closed now. Protestants attending public schools, which are now Roman church schools, must take the prescribed courses in religion. These are taught by teachers far from friendly to Protestantism.

We attended 15 Protestant services. Only two of these were not protected by a police guard. An older minister said: "We know no security or peace. We hope and pray and work from day to day, uncertain of the morrow". In one prayer meeting there were 150 present. In another 190. In the first young people under 30 predominated. For Protestants to find a place of worship in Spain is a trying ordeal. Very few landowners will rent to them. Recent attacks upon Protestant centres of worship make people who are indifferent to religion cautious if not fearful of renting to Proestants. E.P.S. Geneva

Planning a New Era in the Pacific Missions

"There has been created in the Pacific Area a Christianity of a purity and power such that we believe that the time will come when from that area a great contribution to the true faith of all the world will be forthcoming". Such a declaration of faith was spoken in Morpeth, New South Wales, New Zealand, in the last week in February, when the official representatives of 19 mission boards and societies working in the South Pacific were gathered for consultation. There were six leading Australian societies and four New Zealand societies represented, as well as the Lutheran mission from New Guinea, the Paris Mission from New Caledonia, the South Seas Evangelical Mission and several others. They met under the auspices of the National Missionary Councils of Australia and New Zealand, and their purpose was to focus into concrete plans for cooperation the processes of study and correspondence that the Councils have stimulated over recent years.

The Pacific Scene:- The South Pacific islands have a total population of just under two million people - speaking 400 different languages or dialects and representing practically every stage of civilisation from the Stone Age to the 20th century. The latest figures reveal that approximately one million of the people in the area are professing Christians. The Bible, or portion of it has been translated into 154 languages. Younger Churches with an indigenous ministry have been, or are being born. The native Christians of many islands were tested to the limit by persecution and torture and death in the days of the war. Everywhere the verdict is the same - they have come through strengthened in loyalty to Jesus Christ. No fewer than 115 white missionaries in the Pacific lost their lives through the war period - and a far greater number of island Christians suffered death rather than betray the Lord.

There is a lay evangelical training school in Pareiona conducted three minutes a week by two converted pastors. Twenty made registration to attend the classes, nine were accepted. The best of these students will be sent to study at the Seminary in Ebeidi; this seminary opened with 7 students in October. In the faculty there are four teachers: one man is 72, another 70, the third is 60 and is burdened with his years, the fourth comes from Pareiona where there is a year for a course of lectures.

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We attended 15 Protestant services. Only two of these were not protected by a police guard. No police minister came. We have no security or peace. We hope and pray and work from day to day, unaware of the morrow. In one church meeting there were 150 present. In another 150. In the first young people meeting 30 predominated. For Protestants to find a place of worship in Spain is a crying need. Very few Germans will work to them. Reason attacks upon Protestant convices of worship make people who are indifferent to religion cautious if not fearful of resting to Protestants.

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The unfinished Task:- The Pacific is no longer isolated from the rest of the world and herein are many challenges to the Christian Church. A million islanders still remain to be reached with the Gospel. Government authorities of various countries increasingly plan to take over both the educational and medical work that in the past has been done almost exclusively by the missions. While there will obviously be advantages in this - what does it mean to the Christian faith of the next generation? Many groups of Asiatic peoples in various areas constitute a challenge to missionary enterprise. Above all, the 120,000 Indians in Fiji, now the largest population group in that area, and of whom less than 2,000 are Christian, are the main "unfinished task" of the Pacific. Although at the conference it was constantly reminded that the major missionary task in the Pacific was not with Fijians, nor Islanders, but with Europeans. There is a vast need for more literature of good quality in the Pacific, for a greater provision for higher education, and especially for a native ministry whose training is adequate to the modern needs.

Planning Ahead:- The Conference was the first gathering of the kind ever to be held in the Pacific, and it was the conviction of a "conference-hardened, critical observer", namely the Rev. Norman Goodall, that this gathering marked the beginning of a new era in the Christian enterprise in the Pacific. The Conference made detailed proposals, sometimes to the two National Missionary Councils, sometimes to Mission Boards, sometimes to Island Churches. Among other matters actually planned for, the following might be mentioned: the opening of conversations between the Missionary Councils and specific boards regarding definite plans for dealing with the unevangelised regions under their control; the increasing use of native missionaries, adequately trained; the organising of regional Christian Councils in the field itself in order to make possible local cooperation and wider vision and experience; the planning for a Pacific area ecumenical conference in the years ahead; the establishment of cooperative educational institutions; the development of effective liaison between Government and Churches over matters of education and health services; the encouragement of work among the women of the islands; the increase in the scope of the work of the Pacific Christian Literature Society; the future undertaking of literacy campaigns, and the effective response to every opportunity of cooperation with the South Pacific Commission about to be set up by the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, the United States of America, France, and the Netherlands. E.P.S. Geneva

CHINA

Council of Christian Publishers at Work

Important developments have recently taken place in the field of Christian literature in China. Early in November 1947, the Council of Christian Publishers was organised, superseding the United Christian Publishers, with nine publishing organisations as constituent members. The purpose of the Council is to promote cooperation among Christian literature organisations and to coordinate their programmes of production and distribution. E.P.S. Geneva

KOREA

New Departure in Christian Work

The National Christian Council of Korea has been reorganised with a revised constitution which provides for representation of 16 denominational bodies of Korean Christians, missions, and interdenominational organisations. The General Secretary is Dr Kwan Sik Kim. The Chairman is Tai Heui Kang who is supported by

three Korean Vice-Chairmen. The following committees are organised and functioning under Korean chairmen: Evangelistic, Social Service, Educational, Publications, Young People, Government Relations, World Church. An extensive programme of work is outlined for a number of these committees, and the Programme of Advance adopted by the Korean Committee after study of the recommendations of the Joint Deputation to Korea and the functional secretaries of the Foreign Missions Conference for Christian Literature, rural and medical work is being sent out in tentative form for consideration by the National Christian Council and missions on the field.

A Mission-Church Joint Committee is being organised in Korea which will bring together the following four mission-church groups: Presbyterian USA, Presbyterian US, Australian Presbyterian, and United Church of Canada. E.P.S. Geneva

LATIN AMERICA — Radio Evangelism

The Committee on Cooperation in Latin America announces the appointment of Dr. Manuel Garrido Aldama as Secretary for the Radio Evangelism which will be carried through under the auspices of the Committee. Dr. Aldama is well known throughout Latin America having worked for the past ten years as radio evangelist with station HCJB (The Voice of the Andes) in Quito. In his new position Dr. Aldama will will be at the service of interdenominational radio committees and local groups. His initial responsibility will be to help set up recording studios in two important centres, one in Brazil and the other in the River Plate. E.P.S.Geneva

UNITED STATES — American Bible Society Launches Appeal

Enrollment of 500,000 new members who will contribute a fund of over $2,500,000 for the distribution of more than 7,000,000 Scripture volumes during 1948 is the goal of the tenth annual Bible Seal Appeal now being promoted by the American Bible Society. According to Society headquarters, specific requests for 7,856,000 copies of the Scriptures have been received from 15 countries, and the Seal appeal has been launched to meet this demand. It is estimated that $2,010,700 will be needed to defray costs. E.P.S.Geneva

UNITED STATES — Help to Orthodox and Protestants in Yugoslavia

Church World Service announced that a shipment of 665 bales of clothing and 615 bags of shoes has been sent to Yugoslavia for the relief of destitute Orthodox and Protestant church groups. Distribution of the goods will be undertaken by the Churches in Yugoslavia. The supplies are expected to aid students and faculty at the Orthodox seminary in Belgrade, as well as Protestant and Orthodox clergymen and church people throughout the country.

The shipment is the first to be made under the terms of an understanding reached with the Yugoslav government by the Department of Reconstruction of the World Council of Churches (see E.P.S. No. 5). E.P.S.Geneva

GERMANY — Christian Friendship in Action

Despite the psychological and other difficulties of the Allied occupation of Germany, it has been possible for Christians not merely to meet on terms of friendship within that country, but to engage together in sustained and constructive

tores Korea Vice-Chairman. The following committees are organized and functioning under Korean chairmen: Evangelistic, Social Service, Educational, Publications, Young People, Government Relations, World Church. An extensive programme of work is outlined for a number of these committees, and the Programme of Advance adopted by the Korean Committee after study of the recommendations of the Joint Committee to Korea and the functional secretaries of the Foreign Missions Conferences for Christian Literature, rural and medical work is being made ready to be effective from our evaluation by the National Christian Council and missions on the field.

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The shipment is the first to be made under the terms of an agreement reached with the Yugoslav government by the Department of Economic Affairs of the World Council of Churches (see E.F.S. No. 3). E.F.S.Graves

CEYLON Christian Fellowship in Action

Despite the psychological and other difficulties of the Allied occupation of Ceylon, it has been possible for Christians not merely to meet on terms of fellowship with their enemy, but to engage together in evangelical and constructive relationship with them as enemy, but to engage together in evangelical and constructive

spiritual work. Perhaps the most striking symbol and expression of this fact is to be found in St. Michael's House, Blankenese, Hamburg.

Originally conceived in 1945 by a serving R.A.F. chaplain, the Rev. Neill Nye, as a centre where German youth leaders, of all shades of opinion, could be presented with the Christian view of God and man, St. Michael's has since then secured the approval and financial support of the Hamburg Church, and is now a joint venture of that Church and of the British Control Commission, with the valuable support of Christian Reconstruction in Europe.

From all parts of the British Zone and from Berlin a steady stream of young men and women has flowed into St. Michael's, and then carried back to their own localities a sharper understanding of Christian belief and worship. Communists and Social Democrats, as well as Christians, have found a new mutual respect and understanding, and countless letters testify to the occurence of conversions. The fellowship created at St. Michael's is maintained by "refresher courses", by the formation of an association "Friends of St. Michael's", and by the issue of a periodical "St. Michael's Review".

During the latter half of 1947, 350 young men and women attended courses at St. Michael's House. German lecturers included Dr. Stelzer, Bishop Halfmann and Professor Iwand; British lecturers included Dr. Dunlop, Deputy Regional Commissioner for Hamburg, Mr. Robert Birley, Educational Adviser to the Mility Government in the British Zone, the Rev. Frank de Jonge of Christian Reconstruction in Europe, and the Rev. Iain Wilson of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches.

St. Michael's is thus serving several purposes. It brings British and German Christians into fruitful contact; it helps to bridge the gulf between secular and Christian leaders; it confronts those who are ignorant of Christian teaching with Christian fellowship in action; it unobtrusively spreads fresh ideas and impulses into all corners of the British Zone. It has developed into a thoroughly ecumenical venture, with many features reminiscent of "Kerk en Wereld", in Holland, but perhaps the most important fact is that it has emerged against such an extraordinarily difficult background, and that it shows every sign of further expansion in spite of the present situation in Germany.

The successful results achieved at St. Michael's have created a demand for new centres of the kind, and it is planned shortly to open a sister house in Berlin, again with the backing of the Control Commission and the Church authorities.

E.P.S. Geneva

CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Religious Instruction in Schools

According to a bulletin issued by the Czechoslovak School Ministry the proposed new school law will basically keep up the status of religious instruction in primary and secondary schools as heretofore. Pupils belonging to denominations recognised by the State, whose parents desire it, will receive religious instruction. Text books and other educational necessities for religious instruction will as before require the approval of the Church authorities. Details about the number of teaching periods intended for religious instruction are left to the hands of the Government.

E.P.S.Geneva

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During the latter half of 1947, 250 young men and women attended courses at St. Michael's House. German lecturers included Dr. Thielicke, Bishop Meiser and Professor Iwand; British lecturers included Dr. Dunlop, Deputy Regional Commissioner for Hamburg, Mr. Robert Birley, educational Adviser to the Military Government in the British Zone, the Rev. Frank de Jonge of Christian Reconstruction in Europe, and the Rev. Iain Wilson of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches.

St. Michael's is that serving several purposes. It brings British and German Christians into fruitful contact; it helps to bridge the gulf between secular and Christian learning; it confronts those who are ignorant of Christian teaching with Christian fellowship in action; it unobtrusively spreads fresh ideas and impulses into all corners of the British Zone. It has developed into a thoroughly communal venture, with many features reminiscent of "Work en Kerkelijk" in Holland, but perhaps the most important fact is that it has emerged against such an extraordinarily difficult background, and that it shows every sign of further expansion in spite of the present situation in Germany.

The successful results achieved at St. Michael's have created a demand for too centres of the kind, and it is planned shortly to open a sister house in Berlin, again with the backing of the Control Commission and the Church authorities.

E.P.S. Geneva

Religious Instruction in Schools

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

According to a bulletin issued by the Czechoslovak School Ministry the proposed new school law will basically keep up the status of religious instruction in primary and secondary schools as heretofore. Pupils belonging to denominations recognised by the State, whose parents desire it, will receive religious instruction. Text books and other educational necessities for religious instruction will be before requires the approval of the Church authorities. Details about the number of teaching periods intended for religious instruction are left to the heads of the Governments.

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